THE FRUITS *of The* TREE

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By

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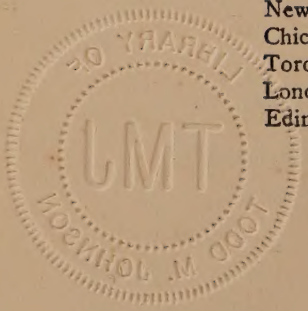

The Fruits of the Tree

I APPRECIATE, beyond the power of words to express, the privilege of participating in this great conference—the greatest religious gathering in the history of the Christian church. I am here because my interest in missionary work was greatly quickened by a personal visit to numerous missionary fields in Asia and Africa.

Having been a church member from the age of fourteen, and having taken an interest in church work, I had contributed to foreign missions as to other branches of Christian work, and had heard numerous addresses by missionaries respecting the work done in the foreign field. In planning a trip around the world I had intended to visit a mission

station for the purpose of informing myself as to the environment of the missionary and as to the details of his work; circumstances, however, very much enlarged my opportunity for investigation. My experience and observation suggest answers to the objections which I had heard raised to missionary work in foreign lands, and it may be worth while to consider some of these objections.

First, it is argued that "we need the money at home" and can not afford to send it abroad. I am satisfied that this objection is not sound. The ministers present will bear me out in the assertion that money contributed to foreign missions is not subtracted from money available for home missions. The foreign missionary work is, as a rule, supported by those who are interested in home missions. The man who excuses himself from contributing to foreign missions on the ground that he wants to keep his money for

home missions, generally finds some excuse for withholding his money even from home missions. The enthusiasm aroused by work in other lands so enlarges the Christian's sympathies that the home missionary work is better supported than it would be if foreign missionary stations were abandoned.

Akin to the first objection is the second, that "we ought to correct the evils at home before we attempt to give instruction abroad." No one will deny that we have a great deal to do at home, but when shall we begin to help others if we must be perfect ourselves before we attempt to extend aid? If an individual refuses to give advice to others, or to lend assistance in the reformation of others until he is himself perfect, he will never render any service to others, for none of us are perfect. Our nation will in like manner postpone forever the rendering of service to other nations if it waits until

there is nothing more to be done at home. No matter how much progress we make, there will always be room for improvement; the higher we rise, the larger the area of our vision and the more we see that needs to be done. If we are ever going to be helpful, we must be helpful while we are still imperfect. The command is not, "Let him that is perfect help the imperfect," but rather, "Let him that is strong help the weak." Every effort that we put forth to help others strengthens us. I remember hearing, in my youth, the story of two travellers in the mountains. One was overcome by cold and sank down discouraged; the other, instead of leaving him to perish, stayed, and by rubbing him sought to prolong his life. The effort kept both alive until help came. And so I am satisfied that the work done in the foreign field strengthens us for the work to be done at home, and that the evidence which the mis-

sonaries bring us of the triumphant march of Christianity inspires us to greater activity, both at home and abroad.

Some complain that the missionaries make but few conversions. It is a matter of regret that progress is not more rapid, and yet that is no reason why we should give up the task. The progress of Christianity is not as rapid anywhere as we would like to have it. More than half of the adult males of the United States do not attend any church, and that, too, in a land where we see on every hand evidences of the advantages which Christianity has brought to our country. If, where the environment tends to bring people into the church, so many remain outside, we must not be surprised if the spread of our religion is even more slow among the heathen, where it is often necessary for one to leave home and friends and to submit to social and business ostracism to become a follower of Christ.

But in spite of all the opposition met by the missionaries Christianity is spreading. The growth of Christianity from its beginning on the banks of the Jordan, until to-day, when its converts are baptised in all rivers of the earth, is steady and continual.

A fourth objection is advanced by a few, namely, that our missionaries may by their mistakes get us into trouble with other nations. Of course, people are liable to make mistakes, whether they live abroad or at home. We all make mistakes, the non-Christian as well as the Christian, the layman as well as the preacher, and a minister may make mistakes in Asia as well as in the United States, but I am convinced that the good that the missionaries do far outweighs any harm that can come from their mistakes. They make us more friends than enemies. The Americans who go into foreign lands to make money are much more apt to involve us in

diplomatic controversies than the missionaries who devote themselves to the uplifting of the people among whom they go.

The cause of missions has been abundantly vindicated by experience and the representatives carry a priceless message. Our missionaries in Asia are entrusted with the important duty of carrying the gospel back to the land of its birth.

The Bible, both the Old Testament and the New, came from Asia; the Holy Land, where the prophets walked and where Jesus taught and wrought, is Asiatic territory. The Saviour complained that, when He came unto His own, His own received Him not; but now that Christianity has vindicated itself in the New World it returns to conquer the Old.

The leaders of thought in the Orient are accustomed to philosophising; they defend their religions as moral codes, and the representatives of Christianity are, therefore, the

more sure of triumph in the end, because they represent the highest code of morals, the most perfect system of philosophy, ever promulgated—a system which fits into every human need and is world-wide in its application.

As Elijah overcame the prophets of Baal with his prayer test, so our missionaries can challenge the non-Christian world to accept, as the basis of comparison, the test set up by the Nazarene: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The representatives of Christianity can present conclusive proof of the superiority of the system which they offer. There has been little, if any, progress in the non-Christian world during the last fifteen hundred years that is not traceable to the influence of the Christian religion; it is the leaven which is gradually but surely leavening the entire lump. While other religions are withdrawing their outposts, Christianity is expanding,

and the unselfish character of the Christian spirit is shown in the fact that schools spring up wherever it is planted and all the energies are quickened.

A religion that does not make one fruitful in good works is not worthy to be called a religion. While the purposes and motives of men are invisible, these purposes and motives manifest themselves in life; they are embodied in deeds.

Paul declared that Christ came to bring life, as well as immortality, to light and, if higher authority is desired, it can be found in the language of the Master Himself, who, in defining His mission, told His hearers that He had come "That they might have life, and have it more abundantly."

There is need of Christ in the present life to interpret life for us. We need Christ in the western world, and no one who has visited the non-Christian countries can doubt that

there is need there, also, of Christ's conception of life. The happiness and welfare of the people will be advanced by the light which Christ's teachings and example throw upon life's duties and responsibilities. Those who enjoy the blessings of Christian civilisation must, therefore, out of gratitude as well as because of direct command, bring the Bible to the attention of those who know it not.

The idea that the character of a tree is to be determined by its fruit—one of the most fundamental principles in our study of nature—runs through the Bible. In the last book of the Word, and in the last chapter of the book, we are told that the tree of life bears "twelve manner of fruits," and that it yields its fruits twelve times a year. The verse concludes with a declaration, suggestive of missionary work, namely, that the leaves of the tree are for the "healing of the nations."

If Christianity is to be the tree of life to the world it must be a fruitful tree; if the individual Christian is to be a worthy representative of the tree he must not only bear fruit, but he must bear such fruit that all may see that he is one of those of whom it might be said: "Ye are the branches."

The fruits of the Spirit are so numerous that it is difficult to select a limited number and describe them as the most important ones, but I venture to submit twelve propositions which are fundamental—twelve truths which must be woven into the Christian life if that life is to be "neither barren nor unfruitful." These truths may be added to indefinitely but the number can not easily be reduced, since Christ Himself has placed emphasis upon each and every one of them.

First—Belief in God, as Creator, Preserver, and Father.

The existence of God need not be proven;

it is a self-evident truth. "In the beginning was God"—we can not go beyond that. We must commence somewhere; we must start with something, and the Christian starts with Jehovah. The mystery of creation is not made clear by assuming that matter and force are eternal; the Christian begins with a more reasonable assumption, namely, that God is eternal.

If it is difficult to understand how there can be an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving God—the Creator of all things, it is still more difficult to understand how there can be a world, such as we see about us, without such a supreme and eternal being as its author and director. It is easier for the human mind to believe in such a God than to believe in any other theory of creation—hence the almost universal belief in a Creator. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." His power, His

wisdom, and His love are all manifested in the provision He has made for the welfare of His children. And how dependent we are upon Him! "Give us this day our daily bread," is not a formal petition. If He ceased to gather the mists from the ocean and form them into clouds, all life would disappear from the earth, but we have His promise of the early and the later rain, of seed time and harvest. If He drew a veil between us and the Sun, night would bring with it a sleep that would know no waking, but light and heat are meted out to us each day according to our needs, and He gives as freely to the humblest as to the greatest. No wonder He is called Father, and Father of all, whether they acknowledge their indebtedness to Him or not.

Christ draws a vivid picture of the Father's care, when He tells us that even the hairs of our head are numbered, and what tenderness

and comfort in the assurance that He is more willing than an earthly father to give good gifts unto His children!

The relation which man fixes between himself and God is the most important influence that enters into a human life; and it means a revolution in the life when this relation is changed. Man needs the inner strength that comes with the conscious presence of an all-seeing God; man needs the inner strength supplied by a sense of responsibility to a Creator for every thought and word and deed. If those, thus fortified, sometimes in the presence of temptation fall, how helpless and hopeless must those be who rely upon their own strength alone!

Second—Belief in Christ, as Son and Saviour, and as "the way, the truth, and the life."

The divinity of Christ is a material part of the Christian creed; it can not be omitted.

If Christ is to be a Saviour, or even an authoritative example, He must be first a Son. It is not necessary to rely upon His birth, upon His miracles, or even upon His resurrection to prove His claim to sonship. In fact, the natural process of reasoning is to confirm the Bible account of His birth, His miracles, and His resurrection by showing what He said, what He did, and what He was. When He is understood, nothing said of Him will seem impossible. He is a fact which can not be disputed—the greatest fact of history. That a mere man should have said what He said, should have done what He did, and should have lived and died as He lived and died is incomprehensible. Reared in a carpenter's shop; without contact with the sages of other lands and without knowledge of the sages dead, except as He gained it from the Old Testament, He, at the age of thirty, announced His messiahship,

gathered a few disciples about Him, set forth a code of morals surpassing anything known before—surpassing any code that the non-Christian world can formulate to-day—and then was crucified.

And yet from this beginning His religion spread until thousands of millions have become His followers and millions have been willing to die rather than surrender the faith which He put into their hearts. Here is One who, for 1900 years, has exerted an increasing influence over the hearts and minds and lives of men—One who wields more power to-day than ever before! How can it be explained? It is not a matter to scoff at; the question, "What think ye of Christ?" is not a question to be brushed aside; it is a question that must be answered. It is easier to believe Him divine than to explain in any other way His words, His life, and His death.

And the same conclusion is reached by an-

other course of reasoning. The work to be done was more than a man's task. No man, aspiring to be a God, could save his fellows from their own selfishness and sin, fortify them against the temptations that come with appetite and passion, and bring them into harmony with the divine will. It needed a God, condescending to be a man, to work in the human heart that continuing miracle which is witnessed when one begins to love the things he hated, and to hate the things he loved—when one who, before the change, would have sacrificed a world for his ambition, stands ready, after the change, to give his life for a principle and finds pleasure in making sacrifice for his convictions.

Neither could a mere man furnish an example sufficiently binding upon the conscience. The best of men have their limitations, their frailties, and their easily besetting sins; and there is danger that these will be imitated

instead of the virtues. As the plant, to repeat what another has said, reaches down and draws inanimate matter up into the realm of life, so we need some divine power to reach down and draw us up into the realm of spirit. Man can respond to a summons from above, but he has no physical or mental force within him which can, unaided, carry him to moral heights.

The foundations of character are laid in youth. Most of us receive our life-inclinations from environment before we are grown —before the reason is sufficiently developed to be trusted as a guide. Youth needs some book to which it can refer in times of doubt and say: "It is written;" youth needs to lean upon an arm stronger than its own and to hear a voice that commands.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Even in our maturer years we need an ideal

which defies complete embodiment in the flesh. It is a low ideal that can be easily reached; when we overtake our ideal, our progress stops. It is the glory of the Christian ideal, embodied in the words and life of our Saviour, that while it is within sight of the weakest and the lowliest, it is yet so high that the best and the noblest are kept with their faces turned ever upwards; and Christian civilisation is the highest that the world has ever known because it rests upon a conception of life which makes that life a continuous ascent, with no limit to human advancement and development.

Third—Belief in the Holy Spirit, God's messenger to man, and man's comforter and inspiration.

If God is a Spirit, and we worship Him in spirit and in truth, it is only natural that there should be some means of communication between God and His worshippers. Christ

taught that such a line of communication could be established, and no one will dispute it who has learned how to pray.

It is not necessary that I should be able to explain how, in olden times, the prophets spake as the Lord commanded them, or how the Bible was written by inspiration; man could see the lightning's flash and feel the shock long before he understood the laws which govern the action of that wonder-working fluid which we call electricity; so, until I have more complete knowledge of the subject, I am content to know that there is an unseen Power which can speak peace to the troubled heart and renew the flagging zeal—sometimes manifesting itself in the "still, small voice," sometimes pouring itself out in a pentecostal flood.

Fourth—Man's highest purpose; to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Other things come afterwards. There must be a paramount purpose in life. As there must be a highest point on every hill—a point from which one can survey every side; so there must be an eminence in every life from which the various elements that enter into life can be seen in proper proportion.

In considering a subject, one must begin with the controlling principle—when it is understood, minor principles fall into place. Some one has aptly illustrated this by saying that if an attempt is made to pull a tree through a gate, the trunk must be carried through first; if one tries to pull the branches through first, they spread out and catch upon the posts. So, the details of life can not be wisely arranged until the main purpose is definitely fixed.

One does not become indifferent to other

things because he puts his duty to God first; on the contrary, he sees more clearly and measures more accurately. The "pure in heart" see not only God, but good; it is self that befogs the mind. No engineer could be safely trusted at the throttle if he were constantly considering whether it would pay him better to wreck the train or to keep it on the track; so, no one can be trusted to decide a question wisely whose mind is engaged in calculating the relative advantages of sin and virtue. The Christian son and daughter are not less dutiful; the Christian father and mother are not less affectionate, because both children and parents accept Christ's doctrine: "He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son and daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." On the contrary, the best children and the best parents are to be found in Christendom, and they are the best because

we can do everything best only when we do first that which comes first. In God's plan, "every truth fits into every other truth."

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you."

Fifth—Love, the law of life.

God is love, and Christ was both the evidence of love and the supreme illustration of it. The Man of Galilee gave the world a new definition of love. The world had known love before; husbands had loved their wives, and wives their husbands; parents had loved their children and children their parents; and friend had loved friend. But here was a love as boundless as the sea—a love whose limits were so far-flung that no one could travel beyond its bounds.

The plan of salvation is easier to understand when one has tried to fathom Jesus' love. Sacrifice is the language of love, and

in no other way could Christ so well prove His love as by His willingness to die that we, through Him, might be saved.

Love is enlightened—it is not blind, as some would have us believe. It penetrates into the dark places—into the prisons where light and sympathy can be carried; it discovers the sick to whom kindness can be shown; it discerns latent strength in those unknown to fame; it detects the weak points in the armour of boasting strength.

Love begets love; heart answereth unto heart. "We love him because he first loved us," has been said of all whom the world has ever loved.

Love is a growing force because it is the one weapon for which there is no shield. Carlyle, in the closing chapters of his "French Revolution," presents an important truth; he says that thought is stronger than artillery parks and at last moulds the world like soft

clay; and then he adds that back of thought is love. Carlyle is right; thought is mightier than force, but only because it is controlled and directed by love. Thought looks up to love as the flower opens to the sun.

When navies no longer mock the thunder with their roar; when armies no more shake the earth with their tread, "and the battle flags are furled"—love's roll call will still be sounded; love will marshal increasing hosts and lead them into a higher arena in which the energies will be employed in saving rather than in destroying, and in which life will be found instead of lost.

"If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries, and all knowledge: and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all

my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind: love envieth not: love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil. Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth, but whether there be prophecies they shall be done away; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror,

darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known.

"But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

Sixth—Forgiveness, the test of love.

At no other point is the contrast more sharply drawn between the precepts of Christ and the teachings of the philosophers of the non-Christian world than on the subject of forgiveness. While the latter contented themselves with rules and formulæ Christ cleansed the heart of that from which evil grows.

Forgiveness is so important a part of God's scheme, so essential to Christ's code of morals, that in the model prayer which He gave for the instruction of His followers, He made our willingness to forgive the measure of our claim to forgiveness: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

How often shall we forgive?

"How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times; but until seventy times seven."

And to what extreme shall forgiveness be carried? There is no limit.

"I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

One of the disciples of Confucius asked him what he thought of the doctrine that evil should be rewarded with good; he replied: "If you reward evil with good, with what will you reward good?"

Then he announced this rule: "Reward evil with justice; and reward good with good." Which is the higher philosophy? Reward evil with justice? How can one tell what justice is if his heart is full of hatred,

and he is waiting impatiently for a chance for revenge?

It is not until forgiveness has taken the place of hatred, not until love fills the heart—that one can frame a true definition of justice or hold the scales with a steady hand.

The doctrine of forgiveness was not urged for the benefit of the forgiven alone; it is necessary to the happiness of the injured party as well. There is no heavier burden than a load of revenge; it will break any man down who attempts to carry it. It is only once—or occasionally at most, that one has a chance to retaliate upon an enemy, but the spirit of retaliation does the one who cherishes it a continuing injury. It is a corroding influence, and destructive of the better nature.

It is for the benefit of the victim of the injury as well as for the punishment of the wrong-doer that God reserves to Himself the exclusive right to visit retribution.

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Here we have suggested a means of overcoming evil, and it is the only way. If you cut down weeds, they will come again; you may cut them down as often as you like, and they will still spring up. But plant something there which has more vitality than the weeds, and you will not only get rid of the constant cutting, but have the benefit of the crop.

So, if we would find a permanent remedy for evil, we must find it in the substitution of a higher for a lower conception of life, and

forgiveness is one of the manifestations of the higher life.

Christ not only gave us a supreme example of forgiveness when, in the very extremity of His physical suffering, He prayed for the forgiveness of those who were crucifying Him, but He gave us a reason for forgiving, which we are not as quick as we should be to recognise. "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Ignorance is often the cause of wrong doing. Even malice may be due as much to the lack of knowledge as to bad intent. Certainly, the one who entertains malice is ignorant of the joy of forgiving. The world needs enlightenment more than it needs the rod; and it is cheaper to prevent than to punish. To hate sin and to love the sinner; to oppose evil and yet seek to rescue the evil-doer, we need—we must have—the forgiving spirit of Him who, when asked to call down

fire from heaven upon those who rejected Him, replied: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Seventh—Brotherhood, the Christian ideal.

The natural and necessary result of Christianity, applied to life, is to weld the world together into an universal brotherhood—"All ye are brethren."

Christ repeatedly, aye constantly, impressed upon his hearers the fact that they were bound together by indissoluble ties. He condensed the Ten Commandments into two: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and "thy neighbour as thyself."

The first defines man's attitude toward the Creator; the second regulates man's conduct toward his fellow-creatures. The law, as proclaimed from Sinai, forbade killing, stealing,

false swearing, etc., but the new dispensation, as presented by Christ, goes much farther—it removes the desire to do these things.

The doctrine of brotherhood was so deeply impressed upon the disciples, that they made it prominent in their exhortations. John even resorted to unparliamentary language in the warmth of his indignation at the thought that a man could love God and yet be an enemy to his brother. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."

And in how many ways this hatred of a brother can be shown! Every act of conscious injustice is outward proof of inward hatred; and much of the unconscious injustice is proof of an indifference to the brother's welfare, scarcely less excusable than hate. The future is bright only because the signs of the times indicate that the development of the spirit of brotherhood is even more

rapid and more widespread than the world's material, intellectual, and political development.

Dumas saw the coming of the era of brotherhood; Tolstoy sees it; it is evident everywhere. The spirit of brotherhood is working in each nation in the awakened public conscience; it is working abroad through the missionaries and the teachers. There is more altruism in the world to-day than ever before; "the middle wall of partition," which has separated man from his brother, is crumbling, and with its disappearance will come a solution of the problems which vex mankind. Christ's platform of brotherhood is the broadest of all the platforms offered to men. There is no question to-day that it will not settle; and no question will arise in the days to come to which it can not be successfully applied. We may go farther than that and say that there is no question—domestic or foreign,

which can be permanently settled by any rule that is not in harmony with this platform.

Man has learned how to protect his own rights; brotherly love will teach him to respect the rights of others.

Eighth—Faith, the spiritual extension of the vision; the moral sense which reaches out toward the throne and takes hold upon those verities which the mind can not grasp.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God;" without faith it is impossible to do anything else of value. Faith precedes works, as the plan precedes the house. The architect must have the design in his mind before he can put it upon paper; and he must put the design upon paper before the builder can give it material form. As the one who directs the construction of a railroad must have, in his own mind, a vision of the track winding up the mountain side before a tie is put into place or a spike is driven, so man must use

the eye of faith if he would plan for a large life. He must, through faith, acquaint himself with the unseen world, for "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

"The just shall live by faith." "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," and man must possess himself of this substance if he would be strong; faith is "the evidence of things not seen," and man must have this evidence if he would fight life's battles with courage and success. One can not tell what he can do until he tries; and he does not try unless he has faith. The great things of the world have been accomplished by men and women who had faith enough to attempt the seemingly impossible and trusted to God to open the way.

The faith of Abraham established a system of religion and as a result of that faith more than four hundred millions of people are now

worshippers of the one God; the faith of the apostles brought Christ's words and life before the world; the faith of the martyrs gave wings to the religion for which they died. Faith, inspiring an unselfish heart, a heart yearning to do some great good, will be found back of every movement started for man's uplifting. Faith in the triumph of truth, because it is truth, has ever been an unfailing source of courage and power. Faith leads us to trust the omnipotence of the Ruler of the Universe, and to put God's promises to the test.

Faith is a heart virtue; doubts of the mind will not disturb us if there is faith in the heart: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Faith is as necessary to the heart of the individual as it is necessary to world-wide peace. What can equal the consolation that comes from reliance upon the care of Him

who gives beauty to the lily, food to the fowls of the air, and direction to all?

"He, who from zone to zone,
Guides from the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright."

Ninth—Example, the means of propagating truth.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

What bloodshed might have been avoided; what slaughter might have been prevented, if all who bore the name of Christian had been willing to trust to the life for the evangelisation of the world, instead of resorting to the sword!

It is a slow process, this winning of con-

verts by example, but it is the sure way—it is Christ's way. A speech may be disputed; even a sermon may not convince, but no one has yet lived who could answer a Christian life; it is the unanswerable argument in support of the Christian religion.

It is difficult, at best, to present a theory to the mind of another without some concrete illustration of the theory. Religion is, therefore, the easiest of all subjects to illustrate because it can be illustrated by a life, and life is the only valid illustration of it. No amount of explanation can excuse a life that contradicts the profession. A religious truth is also the easiest one to test; it only needs to be lived. "O taste and see that the Lord is good;" "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke

is easy and My burden is light." There is no possible excuse for a religious quarrel; let each one live his religion and the world will decide which is best.

But while Christians are in duty bound to perfect themselves as far as possible—and as fast as possible—for their own happiness as well as because their obligation to God and to others requires it—it is not fair to charge up against Christianity every fault that may appear in the lives of Christians. Christ is the light, but when that light shines through His followers it shines through clouded glass. As the white flame in a lantern may look blue or yellow or red according to the colour of the globe which surrounds it, so the pure light which shines from the Christian may be so discoloured by his faults as to make Christianity appear gloomy or sordid, or even dangerous. Christianity should be held responsible, not for the human imperfections

which it has not yet cured, but only for such imperfections as naturally and logically follow from an acceptance of it—and there are none.

It is a tribute to our religion that its critics take Christianity as the standard and measure Christians by that standard, finding fault with them because they do not live up to the standard; fault can not be found with the standard itself.

The progress of Christianity is retarded by the fact that some of those who go from Christian to non-Christian countries show a contempt for the Christian virtues. As the natives usually describe as Christians all who come from the Christian countries, the church is held responsible for the shortcomings of unbelievers as well as for the faults of professing Christians. While the church ought not to have to bear this burden, the fact that it does have to bear it should make Christians

even more anxious to reach those outside the church and to throw helpful influences about those who are temporarily sojourning in foreign lands.

Christian progress is also greatly hindered by the fact that the Christian nations, acting through their governments, do things inconsistent with Christ's teachings. While perfection should not be expected in a government, any more than in an individual—even less, since governments reflect not the highest sentiment in the land but rather the average sentiment—still Christians should deeply feel their responsibility and exert themselves to the uttermost to purge their governments of impurity and injustice.

On the other hand, it is not logical to set up, as an example, a moral man outside of the church. We must inquire from what source he derives his morality. Is it from Christian parents? Then why deny to the

church the credit due for giving a man, in his youth, a moral momentum which still carries him forward? Does he derive his morality from the religious atmosphere about him? Then why deny to the church credit for creating the atmosphere?

The immoral church member who borrows his habits from the outside world, and the moral man outside the church who borrows his virtues from the church, are stumbling blocks only because their inconsistencies are not clearly understood by the unconverted.

Materialism has no morality of its own; it is a parasite which fastens itself upon the living tree of Christianity. It has no trunk; it has no power to send its roots down into the ground and grow upon its own merits. Its tendency is to destroy—not to create. A society fashioned according to its plans would be neither elevated nor lasting; in proportion as materialism is embodied in life it robs

life of both usefulness and happiness, while Christianity grows and will grow because the more perfect its embodiment in the life the more attractive and forceful it becomes.

If it were impossible to secure ministers to preach the gospel to those who sit in darkness; if it were impossible to secure teachers to instruct them, or physicians to heal in the name of the Master, it would still be worth while to send Christians abroad to live among the non-Christian people and to demonstrate that the Christian conception of life can make of a human being a living spring, pouring forth constantly of that which refreshes, invigorates, and uplifts.

Tenth—Service the measure of greatness.

"Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all."

Service is the measure of greatness. It always has been true; it is true to-day; it

always will be true that he is the greatest who does the most of good. Read the inscriptions upon the monuments reared by grateful hands to those whom the world calls great; they record not what the dead have received, but what they have given to the world, and prove that it is, in truth, "more blessed to give than to receive."

And how this old earth will be transformed when this measure of greatness is the measure of every life! We have had our conflicts, because we have been trying to see how much we could get from each other; there will be peace when we are trying to see how much we can do for each other. We have had our combats because we have been trying to see how much we could get out of the world; there will be peace when we are trying to see how much we can put into the world. The human measure of a human life is its income; the divine measure of a human life is its outgo

—its overflow—its contribution to the welfare of the world.

Christianity is not the doctrine of the weakling; it does not enervate. One can be as strenuous in helpful service as in doing evil; the very highest ambition may find its gratification in doing good. Strength and courage —any amount of both—can be actively and continuously employed in lifting up; they need not be expended in beating down. It requires both strength and courage to stand against temptation; one must have both to stand for the right against the wrong, especially when men "revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely." And we must not forget that there is as much inspiration in a noble life as in an heroic death.

Christ's conception of life is a revolutionary one; it will revolutionise an individual, it will revolutionise a community, a nation, or

a world. Let one understand that his success is to be measured (and is not his happiness also?) by his service to society, and life takes on a new meaning. He must now prepare himself for efficient work; he must strengthen his body to endure fatigue, and he must avoid the indulgences which would dissipate his strength; he is ashamed to tender a physical wreck for his Master's service. He must train his mind to act quickly—no dull, undisciplined brain is fit for the work which he desires to do. He must analyse his motives, scrutinise his purposes and bring his ideals into harmony with those of the Perfect Model. In Christ's measure of greatness may be found an explanation of Christian civilisation and an assurance that fidelity to His teaching will result in material prosperity and intellectual progress as well as in spiritual growth.

Eleventh—Do unto others as you would

have others do unto you, the golden rule of action.

Christ declared this to be the "law and the prophets." It is a detail of the general plan, it gives specific instructions as to method. We are not left in doubt as to how we can prove our love or manifest the spirit of brotherhood; we are not only told what to do, but we are told how to do it. It will be noticed that the golden rule of Christ commands that we should be positively helpful, while Confucius, in his golden rule, "do not unto others as you would not have others do unto you," enjoins upon his followers only negative harmlessness. There is a vast gulf between these two rules.

It is not sufficient that we abstain from wrong doing; we must do good. It is difficult to measure the woe which injustice has brought mankind or to estimate the benefit to be derived from the establishment of uni-

versal justice; but the world needs something better than justice. The earth would be a cold and cheerless place in which to live if there were nothing warmer here than justice. We need sympathy; we need generosity; we need that helpfulness which benevolence alone inspires. Many injuries come to man that can be traced to his own mistakes—to his own negligence or ignorance; but we can not coldly turn away from him—we can not leave him to suffer, merely because he may deserve it. We must help him first and advise him afterwards. Even upon the battlefield the wounded are spared and many a life has been saved by kindness shown by the enemy.

Christianity is not an abstraction—it is a reality. To prove his right to the name of Christian, one must be something; he must do something. Love impels him to service through example, and the golden rule points the way.

Twelfth—Immortality, a reward and a restraint.

"If a man die shall he live again?"

What more important question can thrust itself upon man's attention? From the days of Job—even from man's first day upon the earth—down to the beginning of the Christian era, this thought-compelling question has risen to his lips. Christ has answered the question, and answered it to the satisfaction of His followers. By His word, and by His own resurrection, He has testified to the reality of a future life.

Belief in the resurrection is one of the foundation stones upon which our religion rests. It stands or falls with the sonship of the Saviour: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

If Christ was not divine, He did not rise from the dead; if Christ did rise from the dead, He was divine.

We need not worry about the details of the next life; it is enough to know that there is an existence beyond the grave. The God who fashioned this world and suited it to the needs of man, can be trusted to frame a heaven for those whom He has made in His own image.

The transition which takes place when the mortal puts on immortality; when that which is "sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body"—is not more mysterious than the new life "which springs up from the seed which is not quickened, except it die." If the germ of life in the grain of wheat has power to build for itself a new body, so much like the old one that we can not tell the one from the other—if the germ of life in the grain of wheat can pass unimpaired through many resurrections, I shall not doubt that my spirit has power to clothe itself in a body suited to its new existence when this frame of mine shall become dust. And who will measure the

consolation which this belief in immortality has brought to the sorrowing hearts of the sons of men.

Compare the Christian view of heaven with that presented by the teachers of the non-Christian world. Confucius evaded the subject of immortality; Christ left no doubt as to the future state. The Koran paints a picture of heaven which neither furnishes inspiration nor raises man's aspirations; the Bible portrays heaven in such a way as to elevate our thoughts, purify our motives, and ennoble our lives.

Buddhism regards life as a calamity, from which one escapes through loss of individual identity; Christianity teaches us that life is an opportunity, to be improved to the utmost —a preparation for a still higher life, with conscious existence hereafter—where we shall know as we are known—as a reward.

Belief in immortality is more than a con-

solation; it is a restraint also. It tends to establish justice and benevolence as a basis of brotherhood. One who expects to live again —one who expects to see face to face is strengthened to resist temptations that may come to him to injure his brother for his own benefit.

He must be at heart an unbeliever who, to reap an unfair advantage at the expense of his fellow, is willing to risk ages of shame and remorse when he stands uncovered in the presence of the one whom he has wronged.

The fruits of the tree increase in number as the years go by; they increase also as our vision is clarified. When we look from afar we see the more important fruits of the spirit —the fruit that grows on the larger branches. As we approach nearer, the tree grows upon us and we see a multitude of branches and fruit in inexhaustible quantity.

As we come still nearer, we understand

more and more clearly how the tree can, in time, fill the whole earth and how its leaves can in reality be "for the healing of the nations."

Christ is the growing Figure in the world; the story of His life touches the hearts of men and women wherever it is told, and it is being translated into every tongue. Even the children—and who was more tenderly solicitous concerning them?—catch a glimpse of the Christ-life as their innocent hearts receive the revelation which the worldly-wise and the so-called prudent sometimes reject.

Christianity is an increasing force—it is expanding day by day and year by year, as the missionaries of the Cross carry the message into distant lands.

The march of our religion—quiet yet triumphant—is strikingly pictured by an American minister, the Rev. Charles Edward Jefferson, of New York, in a volume entitled

"Things Fundamental;" and with this picture I close:

"Christ in history! There is a fact—face it. According to the New Testament, Jesus walked along the shores of a little sea known as the Sea of Galilee. And there He called Peter and Andrew and James and John and several others to be His followers, and they left all and followed Him. After they had followed Him they revered Him, and later on adored and worshipped Him. He left them on their faces, each man saying, 'My Lord and my God!' All that is in the New Testament.

"But put the New Testament away. Time passes; history widens; an unseen Presence walks up and down the shores of a larger sea —the sea called the Mediterranean—and this unseen Presence calls men to follow him. Tertullian, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Francis of Assisi, Thomas à Kempis, Savona-

rola, John Huss, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin—another twelve—and these all followed Him and cast themselves at His feet, saying, in the words of the earlier twelve, 'My Lord and my God!'

"Time passes; history advances; humanity lives its life around the circle of a larger sea—the Atlantic ocean. An unseen Presence walks up and down the shores calling men to follow Him. He calls John Knox, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, Henry Parry Liddon, Joseph Parker, Jonathan Edwards, Horace Bushnell, Henry Ward Beecher, Richard Salter Storrs, Phillips Brooks, Dwight L. Moody—another twelve—and these leave all and follow Him. We find them on their faces, each one saying, 'My Lord and my God!'

"Time passes; history is widening; humanity is building its civilisation round a still

wider sea—we call it the Pacific ocean. An unknown Presence moves up and down the shores calling men to follow Him, and they are doing it. Another company of twelve is forming. And what took place in Palestine nineteen centuries ago is taking place again in our own day and under our own eyes."

THE END

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